

## Press Release

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### Study proves wood's positive impact on human beings

Now, it's been scientifically proven that wood has a positive impact on us. The European research project Wood2New, which ran for three years and was finalised in February 2017, shows that using wood as a construction material benefits both the environment and our health. Industry, including Kährs Group, has collaborated with scientists from six countries in the project. The aim was to map out the effects of using wood in indoor environments, as well as to stimulate increased use of wood in interiors.



We spend, on average, 90 per cent of our lives indoors. This means that the air quality and indoor temperature not only affects our health, but also our quality of life. But exactly in what way and how much has previously not been mapped out. In order to fill this gap in existing research, an international research project was initiated in 2014 in which a number of wood industry companies and universities participate. The final report was presented at a seminar at Linköping University at the beginning of March 2017.

Scientists engaged in the project state in the report that wood has superior strength in proportion to its weight, is easy to work with, renewable and widely accessible. It is quick to work with, promotes good conditions at the building site, is flexible and provides designers with a great scope of freedom. Furthermore, wood binds and stores carbon dioxide, evens out indoor

humidity and can be recycled. When we, for example, have a shower or cook food on our stoves, it contributes to increased indoor humidity. Wood absorbs this - and later, when it becomes drier, emits humidity – a process that has been studied with a thermocamera.

"Apart from the purely technical properties, we have also measured the emotional aspects of using wood in health care institutions, for example, through using focus groups in different countries. It's interesting to note that wood is perceived in the same way – regardless of culture – i.e. natural, warm and cosy. It has a calming effect, as well as good acoustic and air properties," says Mark Hughes, Professor at the Aalto University in Finland and project coordinator of Wood2New.

The overall goal of the project was to contribute to creating competitive and sustainable wood based interior products and systems for modern wood constructions through:

- Identifying opportunities and limitations for using wood interior elements
- Examining if, and how wood may affect human health
- Developing, designing and evaluating concepts for sustainability, value-adding, multifunctional wood based interior products and systems
- Developing business models based on the acquired facts of how wood affects health

The research project has been conducted, apart from the Aalto University, also at the Linköping University, Holzforschung Austria, Norsk TreTeknisk Institutt (Norway), Building Research Establishment Ltd (UK) and Technisches Büro für Chemie - Dr. Karl Dobianer (Austria).

"We were lucky to be able to engage such committed partners in Europe, including Kährs Group," says Mark Hughes.

The project is part of the international program WoodWisdom-Net+ Research, aimed at strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of Europe's forest and wood industry by developing long-term cooperation between different players. Read more about the project on [www.wood2new.org](http://www.wood2new.org)

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#### **About Kährs Group**

Kährs Group is a world-leading flooring manufacturer in hardwood and resilient flooring with a number of strong brands in its product portfolio, including Kährs, Karelia and Upofloor. The Company's innovations have shaped the industry throughout history and Kährs Group is dedicated to providing the market with innovative new flooring solutions. Kährs Group, which delivers products to more than 70 countries, is the market leader in Sweden, Finland, Norway and Russia and holds a strong position in other key markets, such as the UK and Germany. The Group has approximately 1,600 employees and annual sales of EUR 300 million. [www.kahrsgroup.com](http://www.kahrsgroup.com)